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LB 75

economy. It will not be a mandate for the use of ethanol fuel by any motorist. Seven ethanol plants currently create demand for nearly 200 million bushels of corn a year in the ethanol industry here in Nebraska, and we employ 800 people in the state. In November, the last available data shows that Nebraska motorists use approximately 7.5 percent of the ethanol that we produce, whereas Iowa uses 17.8 percent of their production. I think we can do better. We can expand the use of ethanol in our state, and I know that LB 75 which requires stations to simply offer ethanol at the lowest octane grade will help increase the numbers of usage here in the state. And that will replace foreign oil. Twenty-four gallons of ethanol replaces 42 gallons of...or one barrel of foreign oil. There was an article in the Lincoln Journal Star newspaper this weekend saying that we can expect another summer of high gas prices due to OPEC's decision not to export as much oil. When are we going to catch on? We must use our own product. We have to quit our reliance on OPEC and the oil industry and start using a product that's cleaner burning, fuel efficient. And the way this bill is written, providing ethanol at the lowest octane rating, that product will also be cheaper. It's a product that we make ourselves. Let's support Nebraska's own economy. It's the consumer's choice. This session we'll talk about luring businesses to Omaha from other states, with the Invest Nebraska bill. We have already talked about improving our major cities by using cigarette tax revenues. While the economy is not quite as vibrant in our...in our metropolitan areas as it has been, it's still quite robust. Our rural economy is still in a downturn. We'll have shirked our responsibility if we don't do some real economic development for rural Nebraska. One of the bright spots of our rural economy is the corn milling industry. Adding value jobs in rural Nebraska is what LB 75 supports. I've heard criticism about the bill, that's it's not about fuel, it's about farmers. It's not about jobs, it's about self-reliance. It's not about clean air, it's about building a Nebraska industry. Well, it's about all that. LB 75 supports rural economies by helping build jobs, using farm products that are in excess. It replaces foreign oil and cleans the air. I'd urge your consideration of this bill.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Connealy. Senator